

Death on the Cross



Ten arguments from the Bible

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BY

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Foreword

My late father Hazrat Maulana Abul-Ata Jalandhri was, by the Grace of Allah, an illustrious scholar of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at. He had the distinction and honour of serving the cause of the community throughout his life. He also had the opportunity of having worked closely with Hazrat Khalifatul Mashih II and III.

In recognition of his outstanding services, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II (May Allah be pleased with him) bestowed on him the title of *KHALID*, a famous companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who is renowned for his bravery and victories achieved on the battlefields in early Islamic history.

Sometimes a small article is capable of creating an impact far greater than that of a voluminous book. It is my hope that this pamphlet, which is in your hands, has the same effect.

I remember vividly the circumstances in which my father wrote this book, he was unwell at the time and retired to a small village known as Rambari in Kashmir in order to recuperate. As a result of his illness, he dictated the whole article to me. The article was first published in the monthly *Al-Furqan*, a periodical edited by my father. Later on, an English translation appeared in the *Muslim Herald*, published by the London Mosque. It was subsequently produced separately as a booklet to be distributed widely.

I hope that the reader will appreciate that the article is very concise and to the point. Its narrative is very powerful and full of conviction. Ten arguments from the Holy Bible have been put forward in it. These conclusively prove the fallacy of present day Christian belief in the death of Jesus Christ (May peace be upon him) on the cross.

These arguments have been drawn directly from the Bible and are set forth so clearly that there remains no ambiguity.

When it was originally published, the pamphlet proved to be very popular and useful. I would like to quote one example of its impact in the life of a Christian lady, Mrs. Selma Saeed Khan. She has related to me that when the late Dr. Saeed Khan, who had been preaching to her, finally gave her this pamphlet to read, it shook the basis of her belief to the very core. She said that after having read the pamphlet, she realised that the arguments presented must be taken very seriously. In her own words, this pamphlet proved to be a very significant landmark in her spiritual journey towards Islam.

As a result of having studied the pamphlet, she narrates, that she considered the doctrine of the life and death of Jesus very seriously, and once she was convinced by the Grace of Allah, eventually decided to accept Islam. I am pleased to add that Mrs. Selma Khan has been a very dedicated and energetic preacher of Islam in her own right. Through her efforts many English people have been led to the path of Islam. May Allah bless her with a long life and further success in the noble pursuit.

I give my special thanks to brother Muhammad Saeed Ahmed Lone of East London who has undertaken the initiative of reprinting this pamphlet at his own expense with the approval of the Jama'at. May Allah reward him and bless this publication. Ameen.

Ataul Mujeeb Rashed
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The Birth of Jesus

Strangely enough, the three great religions of the world Judaism, Christianity and Islam are at variance with one another in regards to both the birth and the death of Jesus Christ, who was born among the Jews. The Jews declare his birth to be illegitimate and they are guilty of uttering a grievous calumny against Mary, mother of Jesus. They declare him to be a misfit to “enter the congregation of the Lord” because of his illegitimate birth, God forbid. The Christians on the other hand, believe that Jesus Christ was born without the agency of an earthly father and that he was the Son of God Himself. This shows that both the Jews and the Christians have gone to the opposite extremes as regards to the birth of Jesus. The Muslims on their part believe that Jesus was born without the agency of an earthly father, but he was not the Son of God. A fatherless birth may be a strange incident but it is not unnatural. There have been cases in medical history where innocent virgins have given birth to babies. Even Adam, the progenitor of the modern human race is unanimously believed by the three great religions of the world, to be born without the agency of either father or mother. The Muslims believe that Jesus was a true prophet of God. His birth without the agency of man has nothing to do with his sonship or his divinity. He was human, pure and simple. Jesus invariably calls himself the ‘*Son of man*’ in the New Testament.

The Death of Jesus

The death of Jesus is an equally controversial affair with the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims. The Jews believe that Jesus died on the cross because he was a false prophet. In this regard they quote the Bible.

"And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree.... is the accursed of God...."
(Deut. 21:22-23).

According to them, Jesus was a false prophet; therefore he died on the cross as the accursed of God.

The Christians also believe that Jesus was hanged on the cross and died an accursed death. Paul says:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."
(Galatians 3:13)

But the Holy Quran declares that Christ did not die on the Cross. God saved him from death by crucifixion, in the same way as He saved His dear ones from tribulations. Did not Jonah, the prophet, come out alive from the belly of the whale?

The fact of the matter is that Jesus Christ only fell into a swoon on the Cross, but when he was taken down from it he recovered. He then died a natural death at the good old age of 120.

On the strength of the belief that Jesus was a false prophet the Jews, particularly the Pharisees of his time, brought serious political charges against him. They alleged that he was disloyal to the Roman Emperor and that he had claimed himself to be the King of the Jews. The governor, Pontius Pilate was not convinced of his guilt but being influenced by the tumult of the multitude, he delivered Jesus to be crucified. They put him on the cross where he remained, at the most, for three or four hours only and then was taken down in a comatose state and placed in a sepulchre in a garden nearby.

In those times, it took several days for criminals to die by crucifixion. They suffered the pangs of hunger and thirst and in most

cases their legs were broken. They died a lingering death extending over several days. However, it was not so in the case of Jesus Christ. He was put on the Cross on a Friday afternoon. The following being the Sabbath day, a day of religious observance for the Jews, and no criminal could remain on the Cross on that Holy day, so he was taken down from it after about three or four hours. The loss of blood from the wounds caused him to fall unconscious. He was taken for a *dead* man. His body was placed in a sepulchre in a garden by Joseph of Arimathaea, his own disciple. Jesus being still alive in the sepulchre, left it on the third day in disguise met his disciples at Galilee and ate with them. His wounds were healed by the application of an ointment especially prepared by his disciples for the purpose.

This is the real story of the crucifixion of Jesus. The Christian version of his death is not only inaccurate but also is against historical evidence and logic. They believe that Jesus actually died on the Cross and on the third day he rose up to the heavens. What a paradox! What a myth! Modern Christianity rests on the belief that Jesus died on the Cross. However, if it is proved that he did not die on the Cross nor did he rise from the dead, then the whole edifice of Christianity crumbles to the ground. Paul, who is the real founder of modern Christianity, himself says:

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain."
(1 Corinthians 15:14).

The late Dr. Zwemer, the well-known American missionary has said:

"If our belief in the death of Christ on the Cross is wrong then the whole of Christianity is a farce."

I - The Sign of Jonah

Now we shall proceed with our arguments from the Bible itself, to show that Jesus did not die on the Cross. We read in the New Testament:

"And when the people were gathered thick together, he (Jesus) began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a sign: and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:29, 30).

Again:

"But he answered and said unto them: an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

(Matthew 12:39, 40)

Jesus Christ is here comparing his own fate with that of the Prophet Jonah. Now what was the sign given by Jonah to the Ninevites? The Bible says:

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

"Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest, my voice."
(Jonah 1:17, & 2:1,2)

According to this verse in the Bible, Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish, where he remained three days and three nights and then came out alive from the belly of the fish. It was a sign given to the Ninevites. Jonah prayed to God for deliverance while in the belly of the fish, the Lord heard his prayer and Jonah came out alive. Jesus says that no sign shall be given to the evil and adulterous generation of his time except that of Jonas. Now what is the resemblance between the two signs of Jonas and Jesus? It is nothing but going *alive* into the belly of the fish and the heart of the earth and coming out *alive*. Both Jonah and Jesus cried by reason of their respective afflictions and prayed to their Lord for deliverance. The prayers of both were heard! If Jesus did not enter the heart of the Earth (sepulchre) *alive*, and come out *alive*, where is the resemblance of the two signs?

Jesus promised to show only one sign to the generation of his time but even if that sign did not prove to be true, is there anything also to prove the truth of his claim to be a prophet? Jesus' reference to the sign of Jonah simply means that he would not die on the cross. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the swoon theory is

not based on a wrong hypothesis.

II— Pontius Pilate's wife sees a dream

"When he (Pilate) was set down on the Judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man (Jesus): for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."
(Matthew 27:19)

Pilate's wife's dream was really true and quite opportune. It purports to mean that Christ be saved from the accursed death on the Cross. God saves his dear ones by means of dreams of others as was the case with Joseph who was released from jail having interpreted the two dreams of Pharaoh. God wanted to protect Jesus against his enemies, hence the dream of the Roman governor's wife which influenced his judgement.

III —The Roman Governor's sympathetic attitude

The Jews presented the case of Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Palestine. He held a judicial inquiry into the case and declared that he was not guilty of the charges brought against him. He said unto them:

"Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things where of ye accused him."
(Luke 23:14)

"He went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."

(John 18: 38, 40)

"And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."
(John 19:12)

From the references given above, it is evident that the Governor regarded Jesus innocent of all the charges brought against him by the Jews. He tried his utmost, to release him but when the Jews

threatened to report him to Caesar at Rome, he yielded to them and handed Jesus over to them but secretly he took measures to see that Jesus should be saved. He had his wife's dream before him and he knew full well that the chief priests had conspired against him because of envy.

IV-- Pontius Pilate's attempts to save Christ

Pilate, the Governor, was thoroughly convinced of the innocence of Jesus Christ. He therefore, had devised a scheme to save Jesus' life. As a responsible official of the Roman Empire, he could not openly come to the forefront, but he was the master-mind of the whole scheme and the lead character in the drama. Other characters of the show were Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable councillor and disciple of Jesus Christ. He had already had a sepulchre hewn out in a rock garden nearby. Another actor in the drama was a learned Jew named Nicodemus who was also privy to the whole matter.

We read of him in St. John:

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pound weight."
(John 19:39)

It was very wise of Pilate to choose Friday afternoon as the time for Jesus' crucifixion so that he could not remain on the cross after sunset. The following day being Sabbath, was a holy day to the Jews. He selected Joseph and Nicodemus as the most trusted friends to execute the plan. All necessary measures were adopted to bring Jesus to consciousness. Otherwise, what did Nicodemus mean by bringing the mixture of myrrh and aloes? Jesus was shown to have died in official records, to pacify the Jews and the Imperial government in Rome. Joseph of Arimathaea boldly asked the Governor to hand over the 'body' of Jesus, a request he readily granted. If the plan was not pre-conceived, how could the Governor hand over the 'body' of Jesus to a stranger from outside? There is reason to believe, that Jesus Christ himself must have been informed of the plan, so that his prophecy might come true; "That as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Nicodemus' meeting with Jesus Christ the previous night brings into light the whole story.

V – Duration of Crucifixion

The period of time for which Jesus remained on the Cross was not long enough to warrant his death by crucifixion. Criminals generally took several days to die a lingering death on the cross, on account of the loss of blood from the wounds on hands and feet, the physical exhaustion, pain, pangs of hunger and thirst. The minimum time of death on the cross ranged between twenty-four hours and twenty-eight hours but in some cases it took several days to die on the cross. In such cases it was used to break the legs of the criminals with a cruciflagram, so that death may be hastened by internal haemorrhage.

Further investigation into the matter of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ tells us that Jesus remained on the cross for a few hours only. The actual duration of time Jesus remained on the cross was not more than three or four hours. Jesus Christ, who was in the prime of his youth (33 years old) and enjoyed excellent health, could not be expected to have died within such a short time, especially when his legs were not broken as was done in the case of the two robbers crucified with him the same day.

It may not be out of place here to note that according to the Roman calendar the day began with the rising of the sun and ended with its setting. The same custom is in vogue even to this day in Arab countries. According to John 19:14 it was about the sixth hour of Friday that Pilate spoke last to the Jews about Jesus' crucifixion and handed him over to them:

“And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani? My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?”
(Mark 15:33, 34)

This clearly shows that Jesus retained his consciousness up to the ninth hour of the day and then he fell into a swoon or lost consciousness. This is what the New Testament writers call “giving up the ghost.” None of the writers were present on the spot to stand as eye-witness. The ‘swoon’ was taken to be ‘death’ and ‘death on the cross’ means an accursed death. Do we not read in the Bible, “for he that is hanged is accursed of God.” Deut. 21:23. What audacity

on the part of Christians to call a true prophet of God accursed of God !

VI –Blood and water

“Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was ‘dead’ already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” (John 19:32, 33, 34)

The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus for they took him for a dead man, while actually he was unconscious, or just to silence the angry Jews he was declared to be a ‘dead’ man. But one of the soldiers “pierced his side and forthwith there came out blood and water,” which is a sure sign of life, for blood and water do not come out of a dead man’s body due to the blood pressure being exerted by the heart. There is much food for thought for those who care to ponder over it.

VII – No Eye-witnesses

Three writers of the Gospels state that there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour and that there was an earthquake and the rocks were rent and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. It is a matter of common experience, that at the time of a severe dust storm accompanied by an earthquake, people generally hasten to go home and they do not enjoy the luxury of a bloody sight-seeing. Now imagine for a moment, who could remain to be an eye-witness to tell the story that Jesus actually died on the cross? The Jews, if there were any on the spot, must have run away at the sight of the rising storm and the shaking of the earth must have frightened them to turn on their heels and hasten to their homes. As for the disciples they had already fled from the scene of the crucifixion.

“Peter began to curse and to swear saying, I know not this man (Jesus) of whom you speak.” (Mark 14:71)

“And they all forsook him (Jesus) and fled.” (Mark 14:50)

To be brief, there was no one present on the scene who could

definitely and certainly say that he saw Jesus 'giving up the ghost.' This is all mere conjecture and imagination.

VIII – Jesus' mission to the lost sheep of Israel

1–*"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* (Luke 19:10)

2–*"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd"* (John 10:16)

3–*"And he said unto them, I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also; For therefore I am sent."* (Luke 4:43).

4–*"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* (Matthew 15:24).

From the quotations given above, it is apparent that Jesus' mission was to preach to all twelve tribes of Israel. They were scattered in the eastern countries extending from Palestine to India at the time of Jesus' appearance. Of the twelve tribes of Israel there were at that time, only two tribes in Palestine. The other ten were found scattered in the lands stretching from Palestine to the confines of India. Jesus cannot be said to have been successful in his mission, if he did not address and preach to the ten lost sheep of Israel. The supposed death of Jesus on the cross at the early age of thirty-three year deals a shattering blow to the mission on which he was sent. The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ, after his escape from the cross, migrated to the East in search of the lost sheep. There is ample historical evidence for this supported by the modern 'finds' of archaeology. Jesus found his lost sheep in Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir, preached to them and comparatively, he was much more successful here, than in Palestine. He died a natural death and was buried in Srinagar, Kashmir.

IX – Jesus' victory over his enemies

Addressing his disciples Jesus says:

"Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the

world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:32, 33).

Now what does Jesus' victory consist of? His death on the cross or in his escape from the cross? If he died on the cross, then the Jews were successful because their very aim was to prove that he was false in calling himself the Messiah. They had in their support, the Biblical statement that,

"...he that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23).

But if we believe that he was taken down from the cross alive, unconscious and he entered the heart of the Earth alive and came out of it alive, then he can rightly be said to have overcome his enemies and frustrated all their evil designs. Jesus said:

"For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11:30)

In other words, Jesus said to the Jews that God Almighty would save him from the clutches of death in the same way as He had saved Jonah from the belly of the whale. The similarity between the two incidents can be real and genuine only when Jesus enters the heart of the Earth (grave) alive and comes out alive.

X – His prayer was heard

From the study of the Bible we learn that God listens to the prayers of his apostles and saves them from tribulations and trials. In the New Testament we read:

"...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (James 5:16-18).

Again we read:

"...And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." (John 11:41, 42)

"And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee;

take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will but what Thou wilt."
(Mark 14:36)

From the quotations given above, it is clear that Jesus was terribly afraid of being put to the cross, so he fervently prayed that the bitter cup be taken away from him. Jesus passionately and fervently prayed to God that he might be saved the accursed death on the Cross. How could he then, say that he overcame the world? If he had died on the Cross, the mission of his whole life would have come to naught and wrongdoers could challenge his claim to prophethood. The thought of death on the cross was unacceptable to him. Being a righteous prophet, he was not afraid of mere death. He was certainly afraid of dying on the cross, as such a death could be interpreted to mean an accursed death, which was the very negation of his prophetic mission.

"In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and was heard in that he feared."
(Hebrews 5:7).

Hence, we must presume that his earnest prayer was, no doubt heard and he miraculously escaped death by crucifixion and lived long enough to preach his mission to the lost sheep of the Israelites in the East:

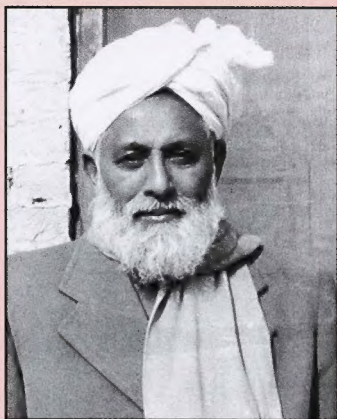
"And he said unto them, I must preach The Kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent"
(.Luke 4:43)

Dear People!

These arguments prove that the idea of the death of Christ by crucifixion cannot be justified even from the Biblical point of view. Therefore, it is evident that the present Christian faith based on this erroneous idea, cannot hold ground.



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THE AUTHOR

Hazrat Maulana Abulata Jallandhari, the author of this booklet, was born on 14th April, 1904 at Kariha, District Jallundhar in the Indian State of Punjab. In fulfilment of the wishes of his father, he studied in the theological college of Qadian and dedicated his life for the cause of Islam.

He started working as a regular missionary in 1927 and was posted in Palestine from 1931 to 1936 where he started publishing a magazine "Al-Bushra" in Arabic, which continues to be published up to this day. He also founded the Urdu magazine "Al-Furqan" and was its editor for 26 years till his death.

In his lifetime he successfully debated on behalf of Islam and Ahmadiyyat with scholars of various religions. He also served as Principal of Theological Colleges at Qadian and Rabwah, as secretary in various administrative departments and in important organisational posts of Ahmadiyya Community. In recognition of such outstanding contributions to Ahmadiyyat, he was conferred the title of "Khalid-e-Ahmadiyyat" by Hazrat Musleh Maoud during Jalsa Salana at Rabwah in 1956.

He was a distinguished member of the team that accompanied Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III to the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1974.

His glorious life and activities came to an end on 30th May 1977. He was buried in Bahisthi Maqbara, Rabwah.